

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BONN 13438 01 OF 02 211823Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 ACDA-12
TRSE-00 MCE-00 OMB-01 /079 W
-----015155 211844Z /43

P R 211808Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0499
SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
USMISSION USNATO
INFO USNMR SHAPE
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY ROME
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE
CINC USAREUR HEIDELBERG
CINC USAFE RAMSTEIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 13438

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MPOL, MILI, GW, US
SUBJECT: NEED TO EXPEDITE TANK GUN IN ORDER TO IMPROVE
PROSPECTS FOR AWACS

REFS: (A) BONN 13254 DTG 191928Z JUL 78,
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PAGE 02 BONN 13438 01 OF 02 211823Z

(B) BONN 9137 DTG 181752Z MAY 78

BEGIN SUMMARY: TO IMPROVE THE CHANCES OF AWACS IN THE
BUNDESTAG, IT APPEARS IMPORTANT THAT THERE BE FUR-
THER PROGRESS ON PENDING POLITICAL/MILITARY QUESTIONS,
PARTICULARLY THE TANK GUN, BEFORE THE BUNDESTAG RECON-
VENES IN SEPTEMBER.

END SUMMARY.

1. WE, AND THE MAJORITY OF OUR GERMAN CONTACTS, ARE STILL OF THE VIEW THAT THE BUNDESTAG WILL APPROVE FRG PARTICIPATION IN AWACS, PROBABLY THIS FALL. HOWEVER, WE WOULD CAUTION THAT THE OUTLOOK FOR APPROVAL IS SLIGHTLY LESS FAVORABLE NOW THAN IT WAS A NUMBER OF WEEKS AGO. THIS CAME OUT CLEARLY IN A JULY 17 CONVERSATION BETWEEN ASSISTANT SECRETARY VEST AND MR. HANS EBERHARD, HEAD OF THE DEFENSE MINISTRY'S ARMAMENTS DIVISION.

2. EBERHARD IMPLIED THAT THERE WOULD BE A STRONG TEMPTATION ON THE PART OF BUNDESTAG MEMBERS, PARTICULARLY CARL DAMM AND OTHER CDU PARLIAMENTARIANS, TO BLOCK FRG PARTICIPATION IN AWACS AT LEAST TEMPORARILY UNLESS, BEFORE THE BUNDESTAG RECONVENES IN MID-SEPTEMBER, THERE IS PROGRESS ON ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

(A) THE GERMAN 120 MM TANK GUN;

(B) THE EUROPEAN TELEPHONE SYSTEM FOR US FORCES;

(C) THE FOLLOW-ON MOU FOR THE ASDM 5-INCH ROLLING AIRFRAME SYSTEM. (THIS ISSUE HAS ONLY RECENTLY COME TO THE FORE AND IS DESCRIBED IN REF A.)

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PAGE 03 BONN 13438 01 OF 02 211823Z

3. OF COURSE IT IS ONLY NATURAL FOR EBERHARD TO SPEAK AS HE DID, GIVEN HIS VESTED INTEREST IN GENERATING PROGRESS ON THE ABOVE THREE ISSUES, PARTICULARLY THE TANK GUN. NEVERTHELESS, WE VIEW EBERHARD'S LOGIC ON THE AWACS CONNECTION AS SIGNIFICANT.

4. AS WASHINGTON IS AWARE, THERE HAVE LONG BEEN RESERVATIONS IN THE BUNDESTAG REGARDING AWACS, AND MANY PARLIAMENTARIANS HAVE BEEN QUITE BLUNT ABOUT THE "NEED FOR US COMPENSATION" IN RETURN FOR FRG PARTICIPATION IN THE NATO AEW SYSTEM. SOME WANTED A US PURCHASE OR LEASE OF GEPARDS, AND ARE BITTER THAT NONE COULD MATERIALIZE. THEY SAW US WILLINGNESS TO ADOPT THE GERMAN TANK GUN AS A POSITIVE FACTOR, BUT THEIR PERCEPTION NOW IS THAT THE TANK GUN IS IN TROUBLE - PERHAPS DEEP TROUBLE - IN THE US CONGRESS. REGARDLESS OF THE FACTS OF THE CASE, THIS PERCEPTION STRONGLY PERSISTS.

5. THE EMBASSY THEREFORE CONSIDERS IT IMPORTANT THAT SOME KIND OF "GOOD NEWS" ON THE TANK GUN BE FORTHCOMING FROM WASHINGTON, AND THAT IT RECEIVE PUBLICITY IN GER-

MANY, BEFORE THE BUNDESTAG RECONVENES ON OR ABOUT SEP-
TEMBER 11. IF SUCH IS NOT THE CASE, THERE WILL BE AN
INCREASED POSSIBILITY THAT THE BUNDESTAG WILL PUT AWACS
ON ICE OR, WORSE YET, DISAPPROVE IT. ALTHOUGH ISSUES
B AND C IN PARA 2 ABOVE ARE OF MUCH LESS IMPORT THAN
THE TANK GUN QUESTION, LACK OF PROGRESS ON THEM DURING THE
SUMMER WOULD ALSO BE UNHELPFUL IN THE AWACS CONTEXT.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 13438

6. WE THINK THE EUROPEAN TELEPHONE SYSTEM QUESTION IS, OF ALL THREE, LEAST LIKELY TO JEOPARDIZE AWACS. THE US POSITION, OFFERING TO PURCHASE \$73 MILLION OF GERMAN CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 BONN 13438 02 OF 02 211822Z

EQUIPMENT, IS WIDELY RECOGNIZED OUTSIDE THE BUNDESPOST AS A SENSIBLE PROPOSAL DESERVING AT LEAST SERIOUS CONSIDERATION. WE KNOW THE DEFENSE MINISTRY, WHICH WILL BE TESTIFYING ON AWACS, EVEN SUPPORTS OUR PROPOSAL AGAINST THE BUNDESPOST. MOREOVER, KARL DAMM HAS TOLD US THAT HE AND SEVERAL CDU DEPUTIES DO NOT EVEN WANT TO REGARD ETS AS A VALID "COMPENSATION" FOR AWACS BECAUSE IT INVOLVES PURCHASE OF GERMAN CIVILIAN RATHER THAN MILITARY EQUIPMENT, EVEN IF THAT CIVILIAN EQUIPMENT IS USED FOR MILITARY PURPOSES. DAMM HAS ALSO APPLIED THIS LOGIC TO OUR PURCHASE OF CIVILIAN VEHICLES FOR THE US FORCES.

7. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT ADDRESSEES RECOGNIZE WHY THE TANK ISSUE IS SO IMPORTANT. THAT ISSUE HAS BECOME, FOR BETTER OR WORSE, THE LITMUS TEST OF US INTENTIONS ON THE TWO-WAY STREET. THIS DERIVES NOT ONLY FROM GERMAN PRIDE IN THEIR TANK TECHNOLOGY BUT ALSO FROM THE LONG-STANDING HIGH LEVEL OF PUBLICITY THAT HAS SURROUNDED THE QUESTION. IT CAN BE SAID CATEGORICALLY THAT THE GERMANS WILL NOT PURCHASE AWACS IF WE DO NOT PURCHASE THE TANK GUN. THE REVERSE LINK IS NOT QUITE SO AUTOMATIC, BUT IS ALSO QUITE IMPORTANT.

8. DEFENSE MINISTER APEL'S CIVILIAN AIDE TELLS US THAT APEL WILL PUSH HARD FOR BUNDESTAG APPROVAL OF AWACS THIS FALL, AND THAT APEL IS STILL OPTIMISTIC THAT APPROVAL WILL BE FORTHCOMING IN THE LATTER PART OF THIS YEAR. HOWEVER, APEL'S TASK WILL NOT BE EASY, AND EVERYTHING POSSIBLE SHOULD BE DONE TO STRENGTHEN HIS HAND. STOESEL

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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